

## **I. Introduction**

The Republic of Haiti faces recurring crises which necessitate appropriate responses. These crises have stemmed from Haiti's failing governance. Over the past three decades, there have been several opportunities to redress Haiti's governance. However, its economic, political and social situation continues to worsen, virtually uninterrupted. Haiti's intellectual and functional decay has defied its associative, economic, intellectual and political elites' capacity to prevent an implosion, which is well underway.

This paradigm succinctly sums up Haiti's predicament. Currently, there is no tangible indication that a new synthesis, breaking away from this depressing outlook is imminent. In fact, no sector of Haiti has resisted the social implosion. This essay addresses the Haitian problem from economic, intellectual, political and social perspectives.

## **II. The Weight of History**

To understand the contours of Haiti's situation, and to propose realistic perspectives for change, one must understand the country's history. This approach offers the best possibilities for understanding the anthropology, epistemology and culture that underpin Haiti's economic, intellectual, political and social processes. Indeed, the post-independence period, is characterized by the lack of construction of the Haitian Nation.

Instead, the history of Haiti is marked by relentless infighting. At the institutional level, the failure is astounding, and comprehensive. Institutions are unstable; and the state is captured by endogenous and exogenous entities.

However, Haiti had started well. The Haitian Revolution was so astonishingly successful that other peoples sought its assistance for their political emancipation. For example, on December 4, 1815, Simon Bolivar landed in the city of Les Cayes to solicit the assistance of Haiti, following his correspondence to President Alexandre Pétion, who received him in Port-au-Prince on January 2, 1816. Pétion provided food, arms and ammunition, as well as combatants for the struggle for independence of certain territories colonized by Spain.<sup>1</sup> Then, forced to retreat in the face of colonialist resistance, Bolivar sought refuge in Haiti, this time in Jacmel.

On the island of Hispaniola, which Haiti shared with the Dominican Republic, the benevolence of Haiti was decisive in the face of Spanish colonialist inclinations. In 1822, President Jean-Pierre Boyer acceded to the solicitation of the Dominican elites for the protection against the return of Spanish settlers. Haiti protected the eastern part of Hispaniola, unifying the island into the Island of Haiti, from 1822 to 1844.

Yet, Boyer, a poor leader, surrendered to French pressure and agreed to pay a "debt" to France for Haiti's independence. It was, essentially, the payment of a ransom demanded by France to "compensate the settlers for their lost property." The "properties" consisted of the former enslaved African and the land they were forced to transform into the wealth of France. For the "crime" of

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<sup>1</sup> See [Haitiinter.com](http://Haitiinter.com) for Haiti's assistance to Simon Bolivar.

regaining their freedom through a mighty struggle against the inhumanity of slavery, colonization and its system of economic exploitation, France imposed a ransom of 150 million franc.

Also, a second socio-historical factor characterized Haiti's resistance to the formation of a Nation united by the ideals of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity". It only took two years, nine months and 16 days, on October 17, 1806, for some of the founders of the Nation to assassinate their Supreme Leader, Emperor Jean-Jacques Dessalines. This struggle for control of political power and its socio-economic benefits foreshadowed Haiti's descent to hell.

Then, a third manifestation of the destructive tendency was the conflict between Christophe, in the North, and Pétion, in the South, as well as their acolytes. Christophe was a follower of the monarchy that Dessalines practiced. Pétion imposed a republic in the southern part of Haiti. Equally decisive, the "deep and lasting divide" between small farming plot holders and the dominant elites for economic control<sup>2</sup> has never been repaired.

Beginning in 1807, the North was transformed into a secessionist system which gave rise, in 1811, to the Christophian royalty accompanied by an economic recovery policy. The death of Christophe in 1820 reunited the country, without repairing the breach, however. The establishment of national cohesion enshrined in the motto "Union makes us Strong" was never accomplished.<sup>3</sup> This divide persists even now: Haitians are balkanized and divided amidst a crushing lethargy.

## **2.1. Of State Capture**

Apart from protecting its political independence for the first 25 years, or so, of the post-independence period, the Haitian state has not properly played its role. Instead of being a neutral arbiter, who stands above the fray, to regulate society, design and implement public policies, apply the rule of law and not of men and women, and protect the nation from domestic and external threats, the Haitian State, with rare exceptions, has proved incapable and rudderless.

To be sure, clever individuals and criminal clans have captured public institutions. This is the case in all public administration, including so-called autonomous and independent institutions. No aspect of state functions has escaped capture; the tentacles of the rapacious groups are so numerous and deep.

The problem, which is unanimously called "the system" by both adepts and cynics, is so nebulous, so pernicious that the instances of control have adapted to its durability. The system works for the benefit of powerful people acting individually or in groups, depending on the magnitude of the resource they seek to control. The result is a torn and shattered society rife with pauperization, disorder and insecurity for all. It is as if Haiti has returned to the state of nature.

The capture of the Haitian state is so complete that accusations of embezzlement are becoming the norm. A curious aspect of the system is the attention paid only to those who hold executive power, mainly the president. For their part, parliamentarians and members of the judiciary, although

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<sup>2</sup> See, Hector, Michel, et Hurbon, Laennec, *Genèse de l'Etat haïtien* (1804-1859), Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2009 ; et [www.openedition.org](http://www.openedition.org)

<sup>3</sup> Sic., 4. An alternative to the emergence of the Nation-state; the Christophian Experience (1806-1820).

universally known for their corruption, are not indexed with the same rigor. Regardless, in the Haitian system, corruption is the norm.

Often, some individuals and companies receive opaque contracts, in return for bribes. The electricity sector is the most glaring example of this form of state capture. To cite just one emblematic example, the efforts of the late President Moïse to reform the energy sector led, in part, to climate conducive to his assassination. To be sure, his clumsy attempt to use the questionable insider dealings in the energy sector to get out of the political quagmire his detractors had imposed, almost since the 2015-2016 presidential campaign, leading ultimately to his assassination on July 7, appears to have failed. The Haitian impasse remains wide open.

At the social level, in Haiti, there are few levers of upward mobility. Young people can aspire to very few opportunities to put their considerable talents to good use. Workers lack protection in a labor market in which employers and hire and fire at will in a country where the unemployment rate is astronomical.

When it comes to justice, in Haiti corruption and impunity reign. Even members of Parliament, with a few rare exceptions, demand bribes for their approval of any action by the executive branch. Legislators have been implicated in all kinds of trafficking. The exercise of state power is one more lever of upward mobility. Some individuals therefore cannot exist without being involved, in any way, with the state. Thus, they have transformed the State into an institution that caters to their personal interests, or those of their clan: lucrative employment, despite the lack of adequate skills, in the diplomatic service; obtaining scholarships for their relatives; travel on fictitious official missions abroad at the taxpayer's expense, among other practices.

In the meantime, the people are languishing in abject and atrocious misery. The environment is degraded with nary a corrective measure being implemented by the elites to redress looming catastrophes, natural or man-made. Territorial administration remains wishful thinking. Drinking water is the subject of a juicy private market that escapes state control. Access to health care is a precious commodity that is seldom accessible, even non-existent, in much of the country.<sup>4</sup> Educational institutions, at all levels, have not kept pace with modern requirements. The few well-trained middle managers and technicians, often at the expense of the Haitian taxpayer, leave the country in search of opportunities abroad.

The diagnosis is almost unanimously accepted. Yet the culture of the scorched earth politics prevails. It makes few concessions. Its many peddlers claim to work for the "little people," whose

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<sup>4</sup> Recently, a former minister of Economy and Finance, Yves Romain Bastien, and a former senator of Artibonite, François Annick Joseph, died in France and Canada, respectively; the spouse of the late president was flown urgently to Miami for treatment following injuries sustained during the President's assassination; former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide flew to Cuba to be treated for COVID-19. Thousands of other Haitians traveled to the United States of America, or to Canada, to be vaccinated against the Coronavirus. The Dominican Republic becomes richer through Haitian investments in real state, through Haitian parents' transfers to educate their children; through the badly remunerated work of Haitian migrants in construction, agriculture and other important sectors. Through the subcontracting of Haiti's governance (even the U.S. systematically gives Haitian migrant resettlement funds to the International Office of Migration (IOM), the Haitian elites have many choices of goods and services of all types; for their part, the Haitian people lives in abject poverty, daily and die of multiple, yet curable, diseases as well as gang violence and kidnappings.

poverty they use to build their comparatively rosy lives. The Haitian's daily life is an ordeal, a Sisyphean feat.<sup>5</sup> The only way out for those who cannot secure a juicy post in public administration, or a rare good job in the private sector, or, to engage in commercial activities, is migration, especially the hope of obtaining Temporary Protected Status (TPS) in the United States of America, or take advantage of Canada's preference for professional migrants, settle in the Dominican Republic, or attempt the perilous journey from Brazil or Chile to the North American El Dorado. Such are the evils of the capture of the State of the Republic of Haiti; no one escapes its deadly consequences, whether they are former dignitaries, wealthy, or destitute citizens.

## **2.2. The Decline of the Elites**

Successive regimes have failed to respond to the great national challenge, either in its political or economic manifestation, and even less in terms of national policy aimed at promoting equal access to social opportunities. It is this grim picture which, in 2021, has culminated in the total collapse of Haitian society. No institution has been spared. The shocking assassination of President Jovenel Moïse, on July 7, results from a cascade of events that represent no less than the collapse of society. It suffices to note a few salient elements of the march toward this result:

- a) Incremental payment to France of the bulk of the ransom of independence, which, in part, deprived the state of resources to ensure sound and rational governance, 1822 to about 1945;
- b) The Luders Affair (1897) and the successive occupations: 1915-1934, 2004-2017;
- c) The various political and social upheavals: assassinations, squandering, looting of public property, and the resolute march towards clientelist governance and the cult of personality of the Duvalier and Aristide, *ad nauseam*;
- d) The adoption, in 1987, of a hybrid constitution ill-suited to Haitian political culture;
- e) Extraterritorial migration and rural exodus, and their corollary, including the brain drain;
- f) Lack of planning in all spheres;
- g) The outrageous deindustrialization of the national economy and the substitution of national production by imported products, even food, household and industrial wastes;
- h) Substitution of the State by non-governmental organizations, bilateral development agencies and multilateral organizations;
- i) The dissolution of the Haitian Armed Forces in 1994;

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<sup>5</sup> See, Camus, Albert, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, 1942.

- j) The disintegration of the State University, especially during the period "democratic debauchery";
- k) The politicization of the National Police;
- l) The institutional imbalance between the two political institutions, the executive and the legislative branches of government;
- m) Criminal gangs that proliferate in a nebulous system called "base", a series of nebulous neighborhood groupings often sponsored by politicians to gain and maintain political power, to the point that even the national Police has fallen prey to this social phenomenon;
- n) Finally, the capture of the state by organized criminal groups from all sectors.

### **III. The Extent of the Crisis**

#### **3.1. Economy**

Haiti is the tangible example of the logic of brutish capitalism. The state, which must regulate trade and industry to facilitate economic development, is too weak to enforce market rules, or control the excesses of the market economy. Also, archaic and Byzantine administrative procedures prevent direct investments, especially foreign ones. However, the private sector shows relative dynamism compared to intellectual, cultural and political circles.

##### **3.1.1. The Right to Property**

Haiti's property regime smacks of feudalism. Even the public, or private, domain of the state is not respected. The Directorate General of Taxes, the body which collects the revenue of the central state, and for the benefit of local authorities, is supposed to manage public land. However, the land ownership register is neither updated nor computerized. So, land conflicts are the norm; and respect for private property, has become the exception. Also, maintaining the practice inherited from the French system, which consists of obtaining the services of a lawyer and a notary, increases transaction costs.<sup>6</sup> As a result of these archaic practices, few Haitians can avail themselves of the opportunity to mortgage their property in order to obtain the funds to invest in the economy.

##### **3.1.2. The Credit Market**

Getting credit tends to be exceptional in Haiti. The rates charged are usurious, and banks require life insurance and collateral, often in excess of the loan amount. If the borrower defaults, the bank seizes the collateral and the amount of the insurance outright, even if the proceeds exceed the defaulted amount. Thus, loan-making practices constitute a major chokehold on economic

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<sup>6</sup> In Haiti, for any real estate loan, the notary, not the bank, holds the property title. The notary's role is indispensable. In many cases, when a notary dies, property owners risk losing the precious document.

growth.<sup>7</sup> In addition, political instability and the dysfunction of the judiciary, which is recognized for its extremely high level of corruption, are additional constraining factors.

### **3.1.3. The Excessive Weight of Imports**

National trade is characterized by imports of all kinds of foodstuffs for resale in Haiti. It is the economic activity of choice. In fact, Haiti has become a sort of garbage dump, especially of refuse from North America. To the indifference of state authorities, Haiti allows a lucrative business of importing household wastes, including barely functioning cars, appliances, used clothing and other items. Worse, a significant traffic in firearms and ammunition illegally imported from the United States of America has flourished in Haiti. Practiced by Haitians living in the United States of America and private sector importers, this evil trade fuels gangsterism, the dire consequences of which spare no one. Or its part, the informal sector constitutes most of the Haitian economy. Its members do not follow any rules, nor do they pay any taxes or fees to the state.

Because of the excessive reduction in consolidated and applied tariffs, since the adoption of the structural adjustment programs of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), in the 1980s, Haiti has decimated its industrial sector. Haiti maintains, on average, the lowest tariffs in the Caribbean subregion, causing a flood of imports. Consequently, Haiti is struggling to integrate the Common Market and Economy of the Caribbean Community (CSME). Yet its population constitutes almost half of the population of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). To integrate the CSME, Haiti must align its tariffs with CARICOM's levels.

By far, Haiti has the worst performing economy in the Western Hemisphere. Its balance of payments is entirely unfavorable. Inflation is rampant, and the national currency is under inflationary pressure from a virtually dollarized economy. Haiti enriches the Dominican Republic, American rice and animal protein producers; similarly, Canadian herring and cod exporters also get their share of the imported Haitian pie. In addition, the lack of investments in infrastructure of all kinds in Haiti, especially roads, airports and seaports, education and health, constitutes an additional boon to the neighboring Dominican economy.

### **3.2. The intellectual Vacuum**

The downfall of the national elites is so advanced that the once prestigious State University of Haiti exists in name only. Along with economic decline and political catastrophe, and its social consequences, the intellectual environment is arid. How does one countenance that a bicentennial country does not have doctoral programs? The scientific rigor and control imposed by the peer review system of academic research does not exist in Haiti. Speculation and conventional wisdom are given free rein.

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<sup>7</sup> Truthfully, in a badly organized society, which is characterized by uncertainty, the lack of trust and the absence of State authority, the entrepreneur is constrained to protect his/her interests which have been obtained through considerable sacrifices.

Almost every Haitian considers himself qualified in fields for which s/he lacks suitable qualifications. Since the education system, at all levels, does not meet the modern requirements of instruction, research and thought process, people who are poorly trained, but functionally literate, in some cases, improvise themselves as experts in all disciplines. Consequently, one can easily assimilate the contemporary Haitian intellectual milieu, with certain notable exceptions, with the salutary adage, "in the land of the blind, the one-eyed persons are kings. "

Regarding the role of ideas in the management of the country, both in the public and private domain, the consensus narrative conveyed by leading commentators and opinion leaders is that Haiti is only a kind of puppet, whose strings are pulled by foreigners. The few research institutes engage in activities that do not promote the quest to better understand the scope of the national problem, even less to propose suitable solutions. Moreover, practically all the offspring of Haitians who have the adequate economic means study abroad. Many of these young people settle in countries where they find more attractive economic opportunities than those available in Haiti.

The brain drain caused by endless crises, the granting of Temporary Protection Status by the United States of America and Canada's migration policy, which grants residency to trained professionals, make it difficult to keep Haiti's brain trust. These two countries and the Dominican Republic take advantage of the dynamism of young Haitians at a relatively low price. In addition, the Haitian elites give birth to their offsprings mainly in American hospitals, and in Canada, mostly, so they can be citizens, with all the opportunities that nationality confers. Therefore, the young people most likely to be able to contribute to a new Haiti's dynamism have either emigrated, or they have a shared loyalty, especially as national legislation circumscribes the participation of Haitians of multiple nationalities in the political management of the country.

If these practices are not curbed, in the future the intellectual decline will be even more pronounced. Haiti faces a huge deficit in planning, design, execution, monitoring and follow-up of public policy, programs and projects management. Quackery is a school. Foreign expertise is required by almost all Haitian elites for even the most ordinary initiative. Often, this foreign expertise misunderstands the Haitian context, epistemology and practice. Notwithstanding, their significant shortcomings, foreigners prevail by default and maintain their influence in all fields with the express, or tacit, approval of Haitian elites. Few social sectors escape this foreign influence.<sup>8</sup>

No sector of Haitian society has been spared from existential decay. Civil society organizations and the religious denominations reflect Haiti's political and social outlook. In the past, Catholic congregational schools trained educated tens of thousands of young people. These institutions have not escaped the national decline. The calamities, such as political instability and economic precariousness, the brain drain and the outsourcing of expertise to foreign entities by Haitian elites have led to the collapse of the education system the same extent that deindustrialization has asphyxiated the economy.

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<sup>8</sup> That's why Haiti has developed a reputation for being a republic of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Broad sectors of its governance are controlled by individuals and foreign institutions, causing, effectively the substitution of foreign entities for Haitian institutions.

The only recourse of the elites appears to solicit providential benevolence to alleviate the sufferings of the masses of citizens and to elicit an explanation for all the ills that befall Haiti.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the intellectual tendency is, increasingly, to hold the syncretic traditional beliefs from Africa – *Vaudoun* – responsible for the national decline, while seeking the intervention of European spirituality for national salvation. The Haitian has therefore become denatured, taken hostage by the Christian missionaries and all manners of Haitian and foreign charlatans, indiscriminately. In this intellectual and spiritual stagnation, religion, cretinism and charlatanism occupy a place of predilection. They have become the last resort, besides migration and rural exodus, for those who lack the intellectual capacity and the courage to face the varying sources of Haiti's decline and the requirements of daily survival in Haiti.

### **3.3. On the Interminable Political Transition**

The Haitian political system is characterized by patronage and gangsterism. The state has virtually no authority. The hybrid constitutional framework adopted in 1987, designed to thwart any dictatorial and dynastic inclinations, following the 29 years of unchallenged power of the Duvalier clan, has proved to be a bitter pill that did not cure the disease. The political system, with a two-headed executive branch – president, head of state, and prime minister, head of government; bicameral legislative power – chamber of deputies and senate; a binary judiciary at the top - Court of Cassation and Constitutional Council - is far too cumbersome and costly. At the territorial level, geographic decentralization and the deconcentrating of public services remain a work in progress. The Port-au-Prince metropolis, the center of political power, commerce and industry, as well as cultural and intellectual activities, has sapped all energies and most of Haiti's meager resources. The 10 departments lack adequate local political representation to meet the needs of their residents. The Haitian territory is therefore, practically, not governed.

Also, the political system is unsuited to Haiti's political culture. There is almost unanimous national sentiment that the 1987 constitution is a considerable source of political conflict and instability. Moreover, the institutional framework is so cumbersome that the 1987 constitution has never been fully implemented.

Thus, a major aspect of Haiti's political challenge is to design a political system better suited to its national realities. When we consider, too, the lack of confidence that characterizes social relations in Haiti, we are therefore not surprised at the total bankruptcy of the company. The collection of atomized individuals, who from the first months of independence faced each other with daggers drawn on all fronts, did not produce national unity, nor freedom, equality and brotherhood. The feat of 1791-1804 produced a nominally independent country, to be sure.

However, the Haitian nation composed of citizens united, based on the national motto, "Union is Strength," around the same vision and a common destiny has not materialized. Instead of catapulting towards modernity and progress, Haiti remains an unfinished mosaic. The construction

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<sup>9</sup> In Haiti, every aspect of life is believed to be a gift of "God." The most common sayings are: « If God wills it, » "Thanks be to God." Unable to explain complex phenomena, or to conduct research, people refer everything to the power and munificence of the proverbial God.

of the Haitian Nation is therefore essential to facilitate the emergence of governance adapted to national challenges.

Currently, following two major earthquakes in 11 years, several devastating cyclones, gangsterism, state capture, accelerated economic and social precariousness, elites unable to offer adequate policy options have led to the implosion of the Republic of Haiti. That on July 7, 2021, the President of the Republic of Haiti, Head of State, was assassinated in his marital room and his wife injured by Haitian and foreign assailants eloquently testifies to the precariousness of life in Haiti. When one considers that the president anticipated the danger, but that his telephone pleas to save his life were in vain, it is easy to understand to what degree Haiti has succumbed to its countless ills.

On the eve of its 218th year of independence, Haiti exists in a legal vacuum that has made its governance extra-constitutional. Two political agreements with similar road maps compete for acceptance. On the one hand, Prime Minister Ariel Henry reached a political agreement with some political parties and civil society organizations. The “Political Agreement for peaceful and effective Governance” signed in September outlined a one-year roadmap for constitutional reform, transitional justice, general elections and a series of measures to alleviate the sufferings of the population and to lay the groundwork for much improved governance.

On the other hand, a coalition of "more than 200 organizations of civil society and political parties" called the Montana Accord, signed, on August 30, a political pact which attempts to rally the maximum number of political parties and civil society organizations. However, the Henry government controls the state institutions. The Prime Minister's initiative, contrary to certain expectations, managed to gain the acceptance of a formerly staunch opponent of the former regime, attorney André Michel. The latter politician had promised, in 2015-2016, to make Haiti ungovernable if the candidate Jovenel Moïse acceded to the presidency.

At the time of writing, it appears that the contending political forces favor converging the two agreements into a broader accord. Meanwhile, PM Henry is struggling to form a consensus government. The government dissolved the Electoral Council set up by President Moïse, frustrating many stakeholders, because this step seems unilateral, even though the political agreement sanctions it. The atmosphere remains tense and is tantamount to a political minefield.

In any case, unanimity is politically impossible, especially in a context characterized by lack of trust and obstinacy. Could it be that, at last, that the time seems ripe for a patriotic leap and transcending personal and sectarian interests. Haitian elites have always resisted initiatives designed to foster lasting change. Could it be that, at last, Haitian elites have transcended their differences to converge towards an outcome that moves away from the crisis in all its dimensions – associational, economic, intellectual, political and social?

The Montana coalition appears to consecrate the political influence of a swath of civil society. The lust for political power and its advantages has removed the mask of an associative movement which had projected the image of staying above the political fray. Either way, a broad political understanding that attempts to reconcile differences, at least until the political deadlines have been

handled successfully, would be beneficial to Haiti. Only time will tell if the political moment is truly beneficial to a political reckoning in Haiti.

### **3.4. The Social implosion**

The findings relating to poor governance, economic asphyxiation, intellectual mediocrity, and the substitution of foreign entities for State institutions explain the lack of authority and the State's capacity regarding:

- 1) the monopoly of the use of legitimate force;
- 2) the lack of a sustained economic growth policy; and
- 3) the non-existence of modern and transparent governance, including decentralization and deconcentrating public services.

These three elements are *sine qua non* conditions for the State to have the authority and adequate human and material resources to manage the national territory and to provide basic services in sufficient quantity and quality to citizens. Also, the meteoric degradation of the geological and physical environment of Haiti and the consequences of global warming, in a country extremely vulnerable to natural disasters, require that adequate corrective measures be implemented as a matter of urgency.

The lack of confidence among the actors, the predilection for imported ideas and methods, the brain drain, political instability, corruption and patronage, the capture of the state by individuals and mafia groups have led to Haiti's national dystopia. The state has ceded control of considerable areas of its sovereignty, as well as large portions of the territory, to national and international entities. This explains why armed groups formed by unemployed young people occupy a strategic portion of the capital, Port-au-Prince, and in other parts of the country. The kidnappings of people for the payment of ransoms affect all social groups. The middle class and the most vulnerable strata, which cannot travel in armored cars, or for whom it is impossible to avoid the most dangerous areas, are the main victims of Haiti's nightmare.

Currently, the Haitian state does not have security services capable of dismantling the armed groups. Influential elements of the Haitian elites have, oddly, sought the assistance of the U.S. to adequately respond to the security challenge. Armed groups deprive the country of goods and services from half of the territory. As for the elections, it will be impossible to convince the Haitian people to vote in such a climate of insecurity. Even in times of relative calm, the electoral abstention rate overs around up to 85%.

The Haitian National Police and the Armed Forces do not have the means to resolve the security problem. In fact, more than a security challenge, it is a social imbroglio generated by the disempowerment of the elites and the bankruptcy of the state. The right solution requires an integrated approach. It would be a massacre to attempt to resolve this scourge by force only. The intervention should include an approach that recognizes the responsibilities of the elites that led Haiti to this social implosion and that includes reinsertion and social integration.

indeed, these young people do not make weapons. Most of them don't even have a visa, or the financial means to travel. Weapons are imported by Haitians living abroad and businesspeople who engage in illicit firearms trafficking in a country that was under an arms embargo for about 25 years. The accomplices to this national dystopia include politicians, police officers, entrepreneurs, Haitians living abroad, customs officials and other Haitian officials. Also implicated in Haiti's descent to hell are American authorities who allow the acquisition and transportation of weapons to Haiti from their territory.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

After almost 218 years of the absence of "peaceful and effective" governance, Haiti is, once more, at a crossroads. Natural disasters and the indifference or incapacity of the elites has further accentuated the national decrepitude; the collapse is total. Insecurity has become the norm, and the state appears to be taking its last breath.

Haitian society needs confidence in its elites to realize the challenge of institutional recovery. The biggest challenge is to identify actors capable of overcoming the mistrust in order to facilitate the convergence towards a cordial national undertaking. Organized civil society, undoubtedly and indispensable, must play its role of benevolent neutrality in the search for suitable solutions to political and economic challenges, above all. It must and can fully contribute to this quest for the coexistence that Haiti so needs.

The role of civil society in overcoming the distrust and in crafting the way forward is indispensable.

#### **V. Recommendations**

There appears to be a consensus that the Agreement for peaceful and effective governance and the Montana Agreement be folded into a broad political accord. It is recommended that:

- 1) That the signatories of both agreements undertake political dialogue, leading to the adoption of a new constitutional architecture and a good governance and economic development plan to be implemented by successive elected governments over 25 years.
- 2) The Prime Minister and the Montana Civil Society platform invite Haitian experts among those living abroad, who have extensive experience in international governance programs, to facilitate the Inter Haitian political dialogue.
- 3) Civil society remains above the political fray in order to play its traditional role as a neutral entity that monitors and evaluates the implementation of the governance and economic development plan.

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